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## ABSTRACT

A joint committee of a local teachers' association and the Tacoma Public Schools studied stress conditions for classroom teachers. Teachers estimated the magnitude of stress for forty-four events and noted those which they had actually experienced. "Involuntary transfer" was perceived as the most stressful event; seventeen per cent of the teachers reported having been involuntarily transferred during the year of the study. Seventy-five per cent reported having to "manage disruptive children," an event which ranked fourth in the perceived stress gradings. A moderately high negative correlation (-.51) was found between reported stress-induced exhaustion and days absent; a similar but positive correlation (.46) was found for exhaustion and the number of stressful events experienced by a given teacher. (Authors/LH)

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# PERCEIVED AND EXPERIENCED STRESS OF TEACHERS IN A MEDIUM SIZED LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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During the 1978-79 school year, the Tacoma Association of Classroom Teachers (TACT) and Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) addressed the problem of teacher stress by conducting a study to determine the perceived magnitude of stressful events and the frequency with which they occurred. The study's inspiration was the work of Dr. Thomas R. Holmes of the University of Washington whose Life Events Stress Inventory and its relationship to susceptibility to illness has been publicized in professional and popular journals in recent years. Our study followed on the heels of research performed by the Chicago Teachers Union and Roosevelt University, and used their Teaching Events Stress Inventory modified to fit Tacoma's needs.

## PROCEDURE

Surveys were distributed via TACT Building Representatives to all certificated staff in all school buildings of the district. Of the approximately 1500 thus distributed, 747 were returned. Three of these were returned totally blank and were discarded. Surveys were also sent to substitute teachers, but so few of these were returned that no attempt was made to analyze them. (See Appendix for forms.)

Part I of the survey requested information such as age, sex, race, teaching position, etc. Part II asked staff members to 1) rate the severity of stress they believed associated with each listed event, using *the first week of school* as a reference point; and 2) check those events which they had experienced during the year. The technique is the same as that used by Dr. Holmes in his life stress studies, and by Drs. Koff and Cichon in their study of teacher stress: A randomly ordered list of events, with the reference item first, is presented to the subjects who are asked to assign numbers from 0 to 1000 to each event, depending on their perception of the severity of stress associated with it. The reference event is assigned a value of 500 so that all respondents start from the same point.

Because instructions were either unclear or misinterpreted, not all subjects responded to each event. Thus, although a more than adequate number of responses (lowest response to an item: 211) were recorded for each event, only about half of the 744 assigned a value to any specific event. These figures are relatively high, compared with the Chicago study, but should be considered a limitation for interpretation since the representativeness of respondents to each event is unknown. Certainly, this year's replication will carry better instructions.

## RESULTS

Background information collected as Part I of the survey appears in Table 1. Breakdowns by age, sex, race, marital status, school type, and position in building were used in the analysis. Table 2 shows number of days absent reported for four

ED186379

SP 015 851

categories. These data were later related to whether teachers reported having experienced stress-related physical illness or exhaustion/anxiety.

*Involuntary transfer* was perceived as the most stressful event of those listed, and *students leaving mid-year* as least stressful. The rank order of events is almost identical, particularly in the top 10, with that of the Chicago study. Table 3 shows the rank order, mean magnitude assigned to each event, and the number of staff who scaled it.

Certain events appeared more stressful to some groups of staff than to others. Table 4 shows these events and the groups which rated the event highest. For example, elementary school staff members perceived *district-wide testing* as more stressful than did junior or senior high school staff; senior high school staff felt that *seeking principal's intervention in a discipline matter* was more stressful than did elementary or junior high school staff. Males felt that *developing and completing daily lesson plans* was more stressful than did females; females perceived *difficulty in dealing with building administrators* as more stressful than did males.

Staff members were asked to check those events which they had experienced during the year of record, April, 1978 to April, 1979. Table 5 presents these data. Apparently respondents checked an event only if it had proven stressful to them, since otherwise certain events (such as *the first week of school*) should have been experienced by 100% of the staff. *Managing disruptive children* (75%), *talking to parents about their child's problems* (72%), *maintaining self-control when angry* (68%), and *teaching students who are "below average" in achievement level* (68%) were the events most often reported by the staff. *Voluntary transfer* (5%), *notification of unsatisfactory performance* (7%), and *denial of promotion or advancement* (9%) were least often reported.

Eleven percent reported *a colleague assaulted at school*, 13% reported being *threatened with personal injury*, and 45% reported being the target of *verbal abuse by students*. Helplessness, the *feeling of inability to bring about change in your building* was reported by 42%. *Lack of availability of books and supplies* was checked by 39%. Over half the respondents (54%) reported *reorganization of classes or program*, and 43% contended with *overcrowded classrooms*.

The number of stress events experienced by those who also reported experiencing either physical or exhaustion illness, those age 30 and under, and teachers of resource rooms and basic skills was larger than the number of events experienced by other subgroups in those categories. Table 6 shows the number and percent of people reporting stress-related illness who experienced each event. Used in conjunction with Table 5, this table shows that, although certain events are experienced by relatively few staff members, a high proportion of those who experience them also report physical illness or exhaustion.

Perhaps the most interesting finding was the high negative relationship between days absent for any of four reasons and the report that staff suffered stress-related exhaustion/anxiety. In other words, those staff members who stated they had experienced exhaustion or anxiety due to stress reported fewer days absent than those who reported no such stress-related problems (Table 7). Also, the higher the number of stressful events experienced, the fewer days absence reported.

Examination of the 20 events perceived to be most stressful suggested that they fell into three categories, of which the first - Communications within building, and district management - was clearly the largest. Table 8 shows these categories and their contents. This study was reported to the Assistant Superintendent for Staff Development and resulted in a series of well-attended stress-reduction workshops and some changes in district procedures regarding assignments, transfers and some building activities.

### THIS YEAR

It was decided to revise the stress study and re-do it for this school year. Unfortunately, data are not completely in yet, and analysis has not been started. However, the changes in the forms and procedure may be of interest.

Rather than the every-person survey attempted last year, a random sample of 400 elementary and 400 secondary teachers was surveyed; since the teaching staff in Tacoma is roughly equally divided between levels, this provided a roughly representative sample. Background questions whose responses were either difficult to categorize, or suspected to be invalid were eliminated; Dr. Holmes' Life Events Inventory was added; and directions accompanying the Teaching Events Inventory were (it is hoped) clarified.

One intent of this year's research is to develop an inventory which can be used by individuals to assess their own status regarding stress and potential susceptibility to illness. It is hoped that staff members will use it to guide their activities and perhaps reduce their chances of serious illness or "burn-out". Another intent is to report to district administrators those areas which teachers perceive as most stressful and which are often experienced, thus providing a guide for action to reduce stress, absence and "burn-out" insofar as possible.

### REFERENCES

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**TABLE 1**  
**Background Information**  
**(744 certificated staff responded to the survey)**

|                       |                           |                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <hr/>                 |                           |                       |
| Sex:                  | Age:                      | Race:                 |
| 289 Men               | 101 30 or less            | 677 Caucasian         |
| 452 Women             | 292 31-40                 | 9 Asian               |
| <u>3</u> No response  | 207 41-50                 | 4 Native American     |
| 744                   | 120 51-60                 | 30 Black              |
|                       | 12 61-65                  | 6 Hispanic            |
|                       | <u>12</u> No response     | 6 Other               |
|                       | 744                       | <u>12</u> No response |
|                       |                           | 744                   |
| <hr/>                 |                           |                       |
| Marital status:       | Type of school:           |                       |
| 102 Single            | 458 Elementary            |                       |
| 555 Married           | 165 Junior High           |                       |
| 46 Divorced           | 119 Senior High           |                       |
| 10 Widowed            | <u>2</u> No response      |                       |
| <u>31</u> No response | 744                       |                       |
| 744                   |                           |                       |
| <hr/>                 |                           |                       |
| Position in building: |                           |                       |
|                       | 517 Classroom teacher     |                       |
|                       | 16 Counselors             |                       |
|                       | 27 Librarians             |                       |
|                       | 17 Resource/Basic Skills  |                       |
|                       | 14 Reading                |                       |
|                       | 60 Special Education      |                       |
|                       | 17 Music                  |                       |
|                       | 16 Nurses                 |                       |
|                       | 19 Physical Education     |                       |
|                       | 4 Behavioral Disability   |                       |
|                       | 6 Head Start/Kindergarten |                       |
|                       | 26 Other                  |                       |
|                       | <u>5</u> No response      |                       |
|                       | 744                       |                       |
| <hr/>                 |                           |                       |

TABLE 2  
Average Reported Days Absence  
for the Year

| Cause                 | Men              |              | Women            |              |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
|                       | Number Reporting | Days Absence | Number Reporting | Days Absence |
| Physical illness      | 289              | 3.02         | 452              | 4.14         |
| Exhaustion or anxiety | 289              | 1.25         | 452              | 1.20         |
| Family illness        | 289              | 1.17         | 452              | 1.47         |
| Bereavement           | 289              | 0.14         | 452              | 0.26         |
| TOTAL ABSENCE         | 289              | 5.58         | 452              | 7.07         |

TABLE 3  
STRESSFUL EVENTS RANK ORDERED BY MEAN RATING  
1978/79 school year

| N     | Rank | $\bar{X}$ | SD  | Event                                                              |
|-------|------|-----------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 422   | 1    | 833       | 256 | Involuntarily transferred                                          |
| 211   | 2    | 732       | 288 | Notification of unsatisfactory performance                         |
| 371   | 3    | 706       | 294 | Colleague assaulted in school                                      |
| 659   | 4    | 675       | 81  | Managing "disruptive" children                                     |
| 239   | 5    | 659       | 293 | Disagreement with supervisor                                       |
| 531   | 6    | 658       | 281 | Overcrowded classroom                                              |
| 384   | 7    | 628       | 344 | Threatened with personal injury                                    |
| 359   | 8    | 610       | 295 | Denial of promotion or advancement                                 |
| 535   | 9    | 589       | 293 | Feeling of inability to bring about change in your building        |
| 388   | 10   | 576       | 312 | Difficulty in dealing with building administrator                  |
| 536   | 11   | 572       | 319 | Target of verbal abuse by student                                  |
| 458   | 12   | 567       | 299 | Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children               |
| 570   | 13   | 563       | 258 | Reorganization of classes or program                               |
| 444   | 14   | 548       | 270 | Change in duties/work responsibilities                             |
| 499   | 15   | 537       | 289 | Disagreement with another teacher                                  |
| 610   | 16   | 530       | 268 | Teaching students who are "below average" in achievement level     |
| 606   | 17   | 526       | 296 | Maintaining self-control when angry                                |
| 505   | 18   | 521       | 268 | Lack of availability of books and supplies                         |
| 226   | 19   | 508       | 262 | Changing classrooms within building                                |
| ----- |      |           |     | The first week of school -----                                     |
| 546   | 20   | 492       | 270 | Implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLO's)                   |
| 431   | 21   | 487       | 282 | Change in principal                                                |
| 316   | 22   | 486       | 271 | Maintaining student personnel and achievement records              |
| 426   | 23   | 468       | 273 | Dealing with students whose primary language is not English        |
| 323   |      |           | 298 | Teacher entering mid-year                                          |
| 323   | 25   | 453       | 266 | Teacher-parent conferences                                         |
| 592   | 26   | 448       | 276 | Supervising student behavior outside the classroom                 |
| 614   | 27   | 444       | 259 | Talking to parents about their child's problems                    |
| 541   | 28   | 442       | 248 | Evaluating student performance or giving grades                    |
| 512   | 29   | 439       | 276 | Seeking principal's intervention in a discipline matter            |
| 531   | 30   | 427       | 261 | Conference with principal/supervisor                               |
| 462   | 31   | 420       | 258 | Students entering mid-year                                         |
| 327   | 32   | 419       | 263 | Voluntarily transferred                                            |
| 368   | 33   | 412       | 266 | Having a research or training program from "outside" in the school |
| 461   | 34   | 400       | 270 | Dealing with student racial issues                                 |
| 514   | 35   | 396       | 240 | District-wide testing                                              |
| 437   | 36   | 394       | 274 | Dealing with racial issues                                         |
| 322   | 37   | 382       | 249 | Teacher leaving mid-year                                           |
| 445   | 38   | 377       | 250 | Dealing with community issues                                      |
| 439   | 39   | 360       | 278 | School lunches, lunchroom conditions                               |
| 474   | 40   | 340       | 244 | Attendance at in-service meetings                                  |
| 402   | 41   | 336       | 242 | Change in office personnel                                         |
| 419   | 42   | 332       | 212 | Teaching exceptionally bright children                             |
| 537   | 43   | 297       | 222 | Developing and completing daily lesson plans                       |
| 473   | 44   | 289       | 217 | Students leaving mid-year                                          |

*F Stress =  $\Sigma$  experienced events    N = 433     $\bar{X}$  = 17    SD = 10*

TABLE 4

# Differences in Perceived Magnitude of Stress for Certain Events by Subgroup

| EVENT                                                                       | SUBGROUPS WHICH RATED EVENT<br>SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER*                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| District-wide testing . . . . .                                             | School type - elementary                                                    |
| Reorganization of classes or program . . . . .                              | Exhaustion--those reporting yes to<br>exhaustion-type illness               |
| Teaching students who are "below average" in<br>achievement level . . . . . | Sex - male                                                                  |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Physical illness--those reporting yes<br>to stress-related physical illness |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| Implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) . . . . .                  | Physical illness - yes                                                      |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| Involuntarily transferred . . . . .                                         | Position - Head Start/Kindergarten                                          |
| Feeling of inability to bring about change in<br>your building . . . . .    | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Age - 31-40                                                                 |
| Developing and completing daily lesson plans . . . . .                      | Sex - male                                                                  |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Physical illness - yes                                                      |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Race - Native American (a <u>very</u> small<br>number)                      |
| Talking to parents about their child's problems . . . . .                   | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Age - 31-40                                                                 |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Position - Teachers of Behavior<br>disorders                                |
| Supervising student behavior outside the classroom . . . . .                | Sex - male                                                                  |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | School type - senior high school                                            |
| Overcrowded classroom . . . . .                                             | Position - Teachers of behavior dis-<br>orders                              |
| Maintaining self-control when angry . . . . .                               | Sex - male                                                                  |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Physical illness - yes                                                      |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| School lunches, lunchroom conditions . . . . .                              | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| Change in principal . . . . .                                               | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| Students leaving mid-year . . . . .                                         | Sex - male                                                                  |
| Target of verbal abuse by student . . . . .                                 | Physical illness - yes                                                      |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Position - teachers of behavior<br>disorders (only <u>two</u> reported)     |
| Seeking principal's intervention in a discipline<br>matter . . . . .        | School type - senior high school                                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Position - librarian                                                        |
| Teacher entering mid-year . . . . .                                         | Position - Head Start/Kindergarten                                          |
| Difficulty in dealing with building administrator . . . . .                 | Sex - female                                                                |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| Threatened with personal injury . . . . .                                   | Sex - female                                                                |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                 | Marital - widowed                                                           |
| Students entering mid-year . . . . .                                        | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children . . . . .              | Exhaustion - yes                                                            |
| Change in duties/work responsibilities . . . . .                            | Physical illness - yes                                                      |

(continued)

| EVENT                                                                        | SUBGROUPS WHICH RATED EVENT SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER* |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Conference with principal/supervisor . . . . .                               | Position - teachers of behavior disorders         |
| Dealing with students whose primary language is not English . . . . .        | Age - 31-40                                       |
| Managing "disruptive" children . . . . .                                     | Physical illness - yes                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Exhaustion - yes                                  |
| Having a research or training program from "outside" in the school . . . . . | Sex - male                                        |
| Teacher-parent conferences . . . . .                                         | Age - 61-65                                       |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Position - teachers of behavior disorders         |
| Notification of unsatisfactory performance . . . . .                         | Age - 61-65                                       |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Race - Asian                                      |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | School type - elementary                          |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Position - teachers of behavior disorders         |
| Changing classrooms within building . . . . .                                | Physical illness - yes                            |
| Maintaining student personal and achievement records . . . . .               | Physical illness - yes                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Exhaustion - yes                                  |
| Number of stress events experienced . . . . .                                | Physical illness - yes                            |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Exhaustion - yes                                  |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Age - 30 and under                                |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Race - Native American (only 2 responses)         |
| " . . . . .                                                                  | Position - Resource/basic skills                  |

*\*Various subgroups estimated the intensity of certain stress events significantly differently. Only those events are listed for which some subgroup's estimate was significantly higher than the other(s).*

TABLE 5

## REPORTS OF OCCURRENCE OF STRESS EVENTS\*

| Event (in descending order of frequency)                               | Percent Reporting Experience ** |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Managing "disruptive" children .....                                   | 75                              |
| Talking to parents about their child's problem .....                   | 72                              |
| Evaluating student performance or giving grades .....                  | 70                              |
| Teaching students who are "below average" in achievement level .....   | 68                              |
| Maintaining self-control when angry .....                              | 68                              |
| Teacher-parent conferences .....                                       | 65                              |
| Supervising student behavior outside the classroom .....               | 64                              |
| Students entering mid-year .....                                       | 62                              |
| Developing and completing daily lesson plans .....                     | 61                              |
| Maintaining student personnel and achievement records .....            | 61                              |
| Conference with principal/supervisor .....                             | 60                              |
| Students leaving mid-year .....                                        | 58                              |
| Reorganization of classes or program .....                             | 54                              |
| Implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) .....                 | 53                              |
| Seeking principal's intervention in a discipline matter .....          | 52                              |
| The first week of the school year .....                                | 51                              |
| District-wide testing .....                                            | 49                              |
| Attendance at in-service meeting .....                                 | 48                              |
| Target of verbal abuse by student .....                                | 45                              |
| Overcrowded classroom .....                                            | 43                              |
| Feeling of inability to bring about change in your building .....      | 42                              |
| School lunches, lunchroom conditions .....                             | 40                              |
| Disagreement with another teacher .....                                | 39                              |
| Lack of availability of books and supplies .....                       | 39                              |
| Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children .....             | 35                              |
| Dealing with community issues .....                                    | 32                              |
| Dealing with student racial issues .....                               | 30                              |
| Change in duties/work responsibilities .....                           | 30                              |
| Teaching exceptionally bright children .....                           | 28                              |
| Change in office personnel .....                                       | 28                              |
| Dealing with racial issues .....                                       | 27                              |
| Dealing with students whose primary language is not English .....      | 27                              |
| Difficulty in dealing with building administrator .....                | 26                              |
| Change in principal .....                                              | 22                              |
| Disagreement with supervisor .....                                     | 20                              |
| Changing classrooms within building .....                              | 18                              |
| Having a research or training program from "outside" in the school ... | 18                              |
| Teacher entering mid-year.....                                         | 17                              |
| Involuntarily transferred .....                                        | 17                              |
| Threatened with personal injury .....                                  | 13                              |
| Colleague assaulted in school .....                                    | 11                              |
| Teacher leaving mid-year .....                                         | 11                              |
| Denial of promotion or advancement .....                               | 9                               |
| Notification of unsatisfactory performance .....                       | 7                               |
| Voluntarily transferred .....                                          | 5                               |

\* Presumably, only those feeling the event was stressful reported it. Otherwise, some events should have been reported by 100% of staff (such as The first day of school).

\*\* Mean number of stress events reported = 17. This average is based on N = 433.

Table 6

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO REPORTED STRESS-RELATED ILLNESS BY EXPERIENCED EVENT

| Event                                                                    | Physical Illness |     | Exhaustion |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----|------------|----|
|                                                                          | N*               | %** | N          | %  |
| Managing "disruptive" children .....                                     | 248              | 80  | 439        | 79 |
| Talking to parents about their child's problems .....                    | 235              | 76  | 423        | 76 |
| Evaluating student performance or giving grades .....                    | 221              | 71  | 404        | 72 |
| Teaching students who are "below average" in achievement level .....     | 217              | 70  | 390        | 70 |
| Maintaining self-control when angry .....                                | 230              | 74  | 397        | 71 |
| Teacher-parent conferences .....                                         | 214              | 69  | 381        | 68 |
| Supervising student behavior outside the classroom .....                 | 202              | 65  | 369        | 66 |
| Students entering mid-year .....                                         | 193              | 62  | 361        | 65 |
| Developing and completing daily lesson plans .....                       | 197              | 64  | 351        | 63 |
| Maintaining student personnel and achievement records .....              | 198              | 64  | 356        | 64 |
| Conference with principal/supervisor .....                               | 193              | 62  | 350        | 63 |
| Students leaving mid-year .....                                          | 188              | 61  | 339        | 61 |
| Reorganization of classes or program .....                               | 194              | 63  | 326        | 58 |
| Implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) .....                   | 158              | 51  | 300        | 54 |
| Seeking principal's intervention in a discipline matter .....            | 185              | 60  | 317        | 57 |
| The first week of the school year .....                                  | 163              | 53  | 293        | 53 |
| District-wide testing .....                                              | 146              | 47  | 285        | 51 |
| Attendance at in-service meetings .....                                  | 158              | 51  | 278        | 50 |
| Overcrowded classroom .....                                              | 163              | 53  | 258        | 46 |
| Target of verbal abuse by student .....                                  | 166              | 54  | 278        | 50 |
| Feeling of inability to bring about change in your building ...          | 163              | 53  | 264        | 47 |
| School lunches, lunchroom conditions .....                               | 135              | 44  | 236        | 42 |
| Disagreement with another teacher .....                                  | 136              | 44  | 227        | 41 |
| Lack of availability of books and supplies .....                         | 136              | 44  | 232        | 42 |
| Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children .....               | 131              | 42  | 205        | 37 |
| Dealing with community issues .....                                      | 117              | 38  | 198        | 36 |
| Dealing with student racial issues .....                                 | 102              | 33  | 180        | 32 |
| Change in duties/work responsibilities .....                             | 110              | 36  | 190        | 34 |
| Teaching exceptionally bright children .....                             | 94               | 30  | 164        | 29 |
| Change in office personnel .....                                         | 99               | 32  | 169        | 30 |
| Dealing with racial issues .....                                         | 92               | 30  | 161        | 29 |
| Dealing with students whose primary language is not English ...          | 90               | 29  | 161        | 29 |
| Difficulty in dealing with building administrator .....                  | 105              | 34  | 165        | 30 |
| Change in principal .....                                                | 73               | 24  | 134        | 19 |
| Disagreement with supervisor .....                                       | 82               | 27  | 134        | 24 |
| Changing classrooms within building .....                                | 68               | 22  | 109        | 20 |
| Having a research or training program from "outside" in the school ..... | 65               | 21  | 108        | 19 |
| Teacher entering mid-year .....                                          | 63               | 20  | 104        | 19 |
| Involuntarily transferred .....                                          | 68               | 22  | 104        | 19 |
| Threatened with personal injury .....                                    | 53               | 17  | 86         | 15 |
| Colleague assaulted in school .....                                      | 41               | 13  | 71         | 13 |
| Teacher leaving mid-year .....                                           | 41               | 13  | 65         | 12 |
| Denial of promotion or advancement .....                                 | 35               | 11  | 56         | 10 |
| Notification of unsatisfactory performance .....                         | 34               | 11  | 45         | 8  |
| Voluntarily transferred .....                                            | 18               | 6   | 36         | 7  |

\*Those people who claimed illness due to stress and who also said they had experienced the particular event.

\*\*Percent of people who claimed to be physically ill and who checked that they had experienced the event.

TABLE 7

RELATIONSHIPS (CORRELATIONS)  
BETWEEN  
ILLNESS REPORTS AND ABSENCES

|                         | Physical illness<br>1. | Exhaustion/Anxiety<br>2. | Abs. - phys. ill.<br>3. | Abs. - exhaustion<br>4. | Abs. - family<br>5. | Abs. - bereavement<br>6. |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. Exhaustion/anxiety   | .48                    |                          |                         |                         |                     |                          |
| 3. Abs. - phys. illness | -.18                   | -.47                     |                         |                         |                     |                          |
| 4. Abs. - exhaustion    | -.20                   | -.51                     | .75                     |                         |                     |                          |
| 5. Abs. - family        | -.21                   | -.46                     | .68                     | .75                     |                     |                          |
| 6. Abs. - bereavement   | -.19                   | -.45                     | .64                     | .65                     | .71                 |                          |
| 7. No. Stress events    | .21                    | .46                      | -.42                    | -.46                    | -.40                | -.37                     |

Table 8  
APPARENT CATEGORIES OF "TOP TWENTY" STRESS EVENTS

|      | Category/Event                                                       | Rank |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| I.   | Communications within building and district management               |      |
|      | Involuntarily transferred .....                                      | 1    |
|      | Notification of unsatisfactory performance .....                     | 2    |
|      | Disagreement with supervisor .....                                   | 5    |
|      | Denial of promotion or advancement .....                             | 8    |
|      | Feeling of inability to bring about change in your building .....    | 9    |
|      | Difficulty in dealing with building administrator .....              | 10   |
|      | Reorganization of classes and program .....                          | 13   |
|      | Change in duties/work responsibility .....                           | 14   |
|      | Disagreement with another teacher .....                              | 15   |
|      | Lack of availability of books and supplies .....                     | 18   |
|      | Changing classrooms within building .....                            | 19   |
|      | Implementing student learning objectives .....                       | 20   |
| II.  | Classroom management                                                 |      |
|      | Managing disruptive children .....                                   | 4    |
|      | Overcrowded classroom .....                                          | 6    |
|      | Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children .....           | 12   |
|      | Teaching students who are "below average" in achievement level ..... | 16   |
| III. | Personal safety and welfare                                          |      |
|      | Colleague assaulted in school .....                                  | 3    |
|      | Threatened with personal injury .....                                | 7    |
|      | Target of verbal abuse by student .....                              | 11   |
|      | Maintaining self-control when angry .....                            | 17   |

APPENDIX

## A TEACHING EVENTS STRESS INVENTORY

## I. Background Information

Please complete this section of the questionnaire by (a) placing an "X" in the appropriate space or (b) writing in the space providing the information requested. DO NOT place your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: ☐ 30 or less  
☐ 31 to 40  
☐ 41 to 50  
☐ 51 to 60  
☐ 61 to 65  
☐ over 65
3. Marital Status: ☐ Single  
☐ Married  
☐ Divorced  
☐ Widowed
4. Race: ☐ Caucasian  
☐ Asian  
☐ Native American  
☐ Black  
☐ Hispanic  
☐ Other (Please name \_\_\_\_\_)
5. Type of school you currently work in:  
☐ Elementary ☐ Junior High ☐ High School
6. Years in education: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Years in Tacoma Schools: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Position in building:  
☐ Classroom teacher  
☐ Counselor  
☐ Librarian  
☐ Resource/basic skills  
☐ Reading  
☐ Special Education  
☐ Music  
☐ Nurse  
☐ Physical Ed.  
☐ Behavioral disorders  
☐ Head Start/Kindergarten  
☐ Other (Please name \_\_\_\_\_)
9. Secondary only: Please list subject: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Elementary only: Please list grade level: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Have you experienced any physical illness that you feel is related to stress in your work in this year April 78 to April 79? No ☐ Yes ☐
12. Have you experienced any nervousness, anxiety, exhaustion that you feel is related to stress in your work in this year April 78 to April 79? No ☐ Yes ☐
13. If you answered "yes" to either of the above questions (11 or 12) please provide a brief description: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
14. How many days of school have you missed as a result of your own physical illness this year? \_\_\_\_\_
15. How many days of school have you missed as a result of nervousness, anxiety, exhaustion this year? \_\_\_\_\_
16. How many days of school have you missed as a result of family illness this year? \_\_\_\_\_
17. How many days of school have you missed as a result of bereavement this year? \_\_\_\_\_

## II. INVENTORY

**Directions:** Please rate the events shown below as to their relative degree of stress. In the left hand column, provide a rating which shows the extent to which the event is stressful to you.

The rating procedure to be followed is: Event 1, the first week of the school year, has been given the arbitrary value of 500. As you complete each of the remaining events, think to yourself, "Is this event indicative of more or less stress than the first week of school?" If you decide the stress is greater than that of the first week of school, then choose a proportionately larger number and place it in the blank directly opposite the event. If you decide the event represents less stress than the first week of school, then indicate how much less by placing a proportionately smaller number in the blank. If the event is equal in stress to the first week of the school year, record the number 500 opposite the event. Please provide a rating for every event.

Please check those events that you have experienced this school year.

| Stressful to<br>you scale | Events                                                               | (April 78 to April 79) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. 500                    | The first week of the school year. . . . .                           | _____                  |
| 2. _____                  | Denial of promotion or advancement . . . . .                         | _____                  |
| 3. _____                  | District-wide testing. . . . .                                       | _____                  |
| 4. _____                  | Change in office personnel . . . . .                                 | _____                  |
| 5. _____                  | Reorganization of classes or program . . . . .                       | _____                  |
| 6. _____                  | Teaching exceptionally bright children . . . . .                     | _____                  |
| 7. _____                  | Teaching students who are 'below average' in achievement level . . . | _____                  |
| 8. _____                  | Implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) . . . . .           | _____                  |
| 9. _____                  | Involuntarily transferred . . . . .                                  | _____                  |
| 10. _____                 | Feeling of inability to bring about change in your building. . . . . | _____                  |
| 11. _____                 | Dealing with student racial issues . . . . .                         | _____                  |
| 12. _____                 | Developing and completing daily lesson plans . . . . .               | _____                  |
| 13. _____                 | Dealing with racial issues . . . . .                                 | _____                  |
| 14. _____                 | Talking to parents about their child's problems. . . . .             | _____                  |
| 15. _____                 | Supervising student behavior outside the classroom . . . . .         | _____                  |
| 16. _____                 | Overcrowded classroom. . . . .                                       | _____                  |
| 17. _____                 | Attendance at in-service meetings. . . . .                           | _____                  |
| 18. _____                 | Maintaining self-control when angry. . . . .                         | _____                  |
| 19. _____                 | School lunches, lunchroom conditions . . . . .                       | _____                  |
| 20. _____                 | Change in principal. . . . .                                         | _____                  |
| 21. _____                 | Students leaving mid-year. . . . .                                   | _____                  |
| 22. _____                 | Target of verbal abuse by student. . . . .                           | _____                  |
| 23. _____                 | Disagreement with another teacher. . . . .                           | _____                  |
| 24. _____                 | Seeking principal's intervention in a discipline matter. . . . .     | _____                  |
| 25. _____                 | Teacher entering mid-year. . . . .                                   | _____                  |
| 26. _____                 | Difficulty in dealing with building administrator. . . . .           | _____                  |
| 27. _____                 | Threatened with personal injury. . . . .                             | _____                  |
| 28. _____                 | Students entering mid-year . . . . .                                 | _____                  |
| 29. _____                 | Voluntarily transferred. . . . .                                     | _____                  |
| 30. _____                 | Evaluating student performance or giving grades. . . . .             | _____                  |
| 31. _____                 | Dealing with community issues. . . . .                               | _____                  |
| 32. _____                 | Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children . . . . .       | _____                  |
| 33. _____                 | Change in duties/work responsibilities . . . . .                     | _____                  |
| 34. _____                 | Colleague assaulted in school. . . . .                               | _____                  |
| 35. _____                 | Conference with principal/supervisor . . . . .                       | _____                  |
| 36. _____                 | Dealing with students whose primary language is not English. . . . . | _____                  |
| 37. _____                 | Managing "disruptive" children . . . . .                             | _____                  |
| 38. _____                 | Teacher leaving mid-year . . . . .                                   | _____                  |
| 39. _____                 | Lack of availability of books and supplies . . . . .                 | _____                  |
| 40. _____                 | Having a research or training program from "outside" in the school . | _____                  |
| 41. _____                 | Teacher-parent conferences . . . . .                                 | _____                  |
| 42. _____                 | Notification of unsatisfactory performance . . . . .                 | _____                  |
| 43. _____                 | Changing classrooms within building. . . . .                         | _____                  |
| 44. _____                 | Maintaining student personnel and achievement records. . . . .       | _____                  |
| 45. _____                 | Disagreement with supervisor . . . . .                               | _____                  |

March, 1980

## A TEACHING EVENTS STRESS INVENTORY

## Background Information:

Please complete this section of the questionnaire by (a) placing an "X" in the appropriate space or (b) writing in the space providing the information requested. DO NOT place your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: ☐ 30 or less  
☐ 31 to 40  
☐ 41 to 50  
☐ 51 to 60  
☐ 61 to 65  
☐ over 65
3. Race: ☐ Caucasian  
☐ Asian  
☐ Native American  
☐ Black  
☐ Hispanic  
☐ Other (Please name \_\_\_\_\_)
4. At what level are you currently working?  
☐ Elementary ☐ Junior high ☐ Senior high
5. Years in education: \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Years in Tacoma Schools: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you experienced any physical illness that you feel is related to stress in your work in this year of March '79 to March '80? No ☐ Yes ☐
8. Have you experienced any nervousness, anxiety, exhaustion that you feel is related to stress in your work in this year of March '79 to March '80? No ☐ Yes ☐
9. If you answered "yes" to either of the above questions (7 or 8), please provide a brief description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How many days have you missed in this year of March '79 to March '80 as a result of your own physical illness \_\_\_\_\_, from stress \_\_\_\_\_, from other causes \_\_\_\_\_?
11. How many days of school have you missed in this year of March '79 to March '80 as a result of nervousness, anxiety, exhaustion \_\_\_\_\_, from stress \_\_\_\_\_, from other causes \_\_\_\_\_?
12. How many days of school have you missed in this year of March '79 to March '80 as a result of family illness? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Did you fill out and return the "Teaching Stress Inventory" in March '79? No ☐ Yes ☐

## 11. INVENTORY

**DIRECTIONS:** Please rate all of the events shown below as to their relative degree of stress. In the column provide a rating which shows the extent to which the event is stressful to you.

The rating procedure to be followed is: Event #1, the first week of the school year, has been given the arbitrary value of 500. As you complete each of the remaining events, think to yourself, "Is this event indicative of more or less stress than the first week of school?" If you decide the stress would be greater than that of the first week of school, then choose a proportionately larger number up to 1,000, and place it in the blank directly opposite the event. If you decide the event represents less stress than the first week of school, then indicate how much less by placing a proportionately smaller number in the blank. If the event is equal in stress to the first week of the school year, record the number 500 opposite the event. Please provide a rating for every event, even if you have not experienced it yourself.

| Events                                                                           | March '79 to March '80 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. The first week of the school year . . . . .                                   | 500                    |
| 2. Denial of promotion or advancement . . . . .                                  |                        |
| 3. Districtwide testing . . . . .                                                |                        |
| 4. Change in office personnel . . . . .                                          |                        |
| 5. Reorganization of classes or program . . . . .                                |                        |
| 6. Teaching exceptionally bright children . . . . .                              |                        |
| 7. Teaching students who are "below average" in achievement level . . . . .      |                        |
| 8. Implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) . . . . .                     |                        |
| 9. Involuntarily transferred . . . . .                                           |                        |
| 10. Feeling of inability to bring about change in your building . . . . .        |                        |
| 11. Dealing with student racial issues . . . . .                                 |                        |
| 12. Developing and completing daily lesson plans . . . . .                       |                        |
| 13. Dealing with racial issues . . . . .                                         |                        |
| 14. Talking to parents about their child's problems . . . . .                    |                        |
| 15. Supervising student behavior outside the classroom . . . . .                 |                        |
| 16. Overcrowded classroom . . . . .                                              |                        |
| 17. Attendance at inservice meetings . . . . .                                   |                        |
| 18. Maintaining self-control when angry . . . . .                                |                        |
| 19. School lunches, lunchroom conditions . . . . .                               |                        |
| 20. Change in principal . . . . .                                                |                        |
| 21. Students leaving mid-year . . . . .                                          |                        |
| 22. Target of verbal abuse by student . . . . .                                  |                        |
| 23. Disagreement with another teacher . . . . .                                  |                        |
| 24. Seeking principal's intervention in a discipline matter . . . . .            |                        |
| 25. Teacher entering mid-year . . . . .                                          |                        |
| 26. Difficulty in dealing with building administrator . . . . .                  |                        |
| 27. Threatened with personal injury . . . . .                                    |                        |
| 28. Students entering mid-year . . . . .                                         |                        |
| 29. Voluntarily transferred . . . . .                                            |                        |
| 30. Evaluating student performance or giving grades . . . . .                    |                        |
| 31. Dealing with community issues . . . . .                                      |                        |
| 32. Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children . . . . .               |                        |
| 33. Change in duties/work responsibilities . . . . .                             |                        |
| 34. Colleague assaulted in school . . . . .                                      |                        |
| 35. Conference with principal/supervisor . . . . .                               |                        |
| 36. Dealing with students whose primary language is not English . . . . .        |                        |
| 37. Managing "disruptive" children . . . . .                                     |                        |
| 38. Teacher leaving mid-year . . . . .                                           |                        |
| 39. Lack of availability of books and supplies . . . . .                         |                        |
| 40. Having a research or training program from "outside" in the school . . . . . |                        |
| 41. Teacher-parent conferences . . . . .                                         |                        |
| 42. Notification of unsatisfactory performance . . . . .                         |                        |
| 43. Changing classrooms within building . . . . .                                |                        |
| 44. Maintaining student personnel and achievement records . . . . .              |                        |
| 45. Disagreement with supervisor . . . . .                                       | 18                     |

# III. INVENTORY

Number \_\_\_\_\_

00096

DIRECTIONS: Please check those events that you have experienced this school year.

| Events                                                                          | March '79 to March '80 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. The first week of the school year. . . . .                                   | _____                  |
| 2. Denial of promotion or advancement. . . . .                                  | _____                  |
| 3. Districtwide testing. . . . .                                                | _____                  |
| 4. Change in office personnel. . . . .                                          | _____                  |
| 5. Reorganization of classes or program. . . . .                                | _____                  |
| 6. Teaching exceptionally bright children. . . . .                              | _____                  |
| 7. Teaching students who are 'below average' in achievement level. . . . .      | _____                  |
| 8. Implementing Student Learning Objectives (SLO's). . . . .                    | _____                  |
| 9. Involuntarily transferred. . . . .                                           | _____                  |
| 10. Feeling of inability to bring about change in your building. . . . .        | _____                  |
| 11. Dealing with student racial issues. . . . .                                 | _____                  |
| 12. Developing and completing daily lesson plans. . . . .                       | _____                  |
| 13. Dealing with racial issues. . . . .                                         | _____                  |
| 14. Talking to parents about their child's problems. . . . .                    | _____                  |
| 15. Supervising student behavior outside the classroom. . . . .                 | _____                  |
| 16. Overcrowded classroom. . . . .                                              | _____                  |
| 17. Attendance at inservice meetings. . . . .                                   | _____                  |
| 18. Maintaining self-control when angry. . . . .                                | _____                  |
| 19. School lunches, lunchroom conditions. . . . .                               | _____                  |
| 20. Change in principal. . . . .                                                | _____                  |
| 21. Students leaving mid-year. . . . .                                          | _____                  |
| 22. Target of verbal abuse by student. . . . .                                  | _____                  |
| 23. Disagreement with another teacher. . . . .                                  | _____                  |
| 24. Seeking principal's intervention in a discipline matter. . . . .            | _____                  |
| 25. Teacher entering mid-year. . . . .                                          | _____                  |
| 26. Difficulty in dealing with building administrator. . . . .                  | _____                  |
| 27. Threatened with personal injury. . . . .                                    | _____                  |
| 28. Students entering mid-year. . . . .                                         | _____                  |
| 29. Voluntarily transferred. . . . .                                            | _____                  |
| 30. Evaluating student performance or giving grades. . . . .                    | _____                  |
| 31. Dealing with community issues. . . . .                                      | _____                  |
| 32. Teaching physically or mentally handicapped children. . . . .               | _____                  |
| 33. Change in duties/work responsibilities. . . . .                             | _____                  |
| 34. Colleague assaulted in school. . . . .                                      | _____                  |
| 35. Conference with principal/supervisor. . . . .                               | _____                  |
| 36. Dealing with students whose primary language is not English. . . . .        | _____                  |
| 37. Managing "disruptive" children. . . . .                                     | _____                  |
| 38. Teacher leaving mid-year. . . . .                                           | _____                  |
| 39. Lack of availability of books and supplies. . . . .                         | _____                  |
| 40. Having a research or training program from "outside" in the school. . . . . | _____                  |
| 41. Teacher-parent conferences. . . . .                                         | _____                  |
| 42. Notification of unsatisfactory performance. . . . .                         | _____                  |
| 43. Changing classrooms within building. . . . .                                | _____                  |
| 44. Maintaining student personnel and achievement records. . . . .              | _____                  |
| 45. Disagreement with supervisor. . . . .                                       | _____                  |

-over-

# LIFE EVENTS INVENTORY

The Life Events Scale is a way of determining how many change-events you have undergone in a year. This scale is for personal events. On another page you will find the professional events scale which is under development. Eventually, the two scales will be combined to provide a tool for you to use in determining your "risk of illness from change."

Please check in the blanks at the left of each event those which you have experienced this year and transfer the value of each event to the Your Score column. The extra blanks are for you to fill in any events you have experienced, either personal or professional, with an estimate of their impact (using a scale of 0-100, with marriage representing 50, the midpoint of impact).

| Life Event                                | Value | Your Score | Life Event                               | Value | Your Score |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|------------|------------------------------------------|-------|------------|
| Death of spouse                           | 100   |            | Trouble with in-laws                     | 29    |            |
| Divorce                                   | 73    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Outstanding personal achievement         | 28    |            |
| Marital separation                        | 65    |            | Spouse begins or stops work              | 26    |            |
| Jail term                                 | 63    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Begin or end school                      | 26    |            |
| Death of close family member              | 63    |            |                                          |       |            |
| Personal injury or illness                | 53    |            | Change in living conditions              | 25    |            |
|                                           |       |            | Revision of personal habits              | 24    |            |
| Marriage                                  | 50    |            | Trouble with boss                        | 23    |            |
| Fired from work                           | 47    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Change in work hours or conditions       | 20    |            |
| Marital reconciliation                    | 45    |            | Change in residence                      | 20    |            |
| Retirement                                | 45    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Change in schools                        | 20    |            |
| Change in health of family member         | 44    |            | Change in recreation                     | 19    |            |
| Pregnancy                                 | 40    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Change in church activities              | 19    |            |
| Sex difficulties                          | 39    |            | Change in social activities              | 18    |            |
| Gain of new family member                 | 39    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Mortgage or loan less than \$10,000      | 17    |            |
| Business readjustment                     | 39    |            | Change in sleeping habits                | 16    |            |
| Change in financial state                 | 38    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Change in number of family get-togethers | 15    |            |
| Death of close friend                     | 37    |            | Change in eating habits                  | 15    |            |
| Change to different line of work          | 36    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            | Vacation                                 | 13    |            |
| Change in number of arguments with spouse | 35    |            | Christmas                                | 12    |            |
| Mortgage over \$10,000                    | 31    |            |                                          |       |            |
| Foreclosure of mortgage or loan           | 30    |            | Minor violations of the law              | 11    |            |
| Change in responsibilities at work        | 29    |            |                                          |       |            |
|                                           |       |            |                                          |       |            |
| Son or daughter leaving home              | 29    |            |                                          |       |            |

Your Total \_\_\_\_\_